


Accepted by the Graduate Faculty, Indiana University,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts in English.

**"Let the Islands be populated with Americans": Travel-Burlesque and U.S. Imperialism
in Mark Twain's *Letters from Hawaii***

M.A. Committee


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Submitted to the faculty of the University Graduate School
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree
Master of Arts in English
in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
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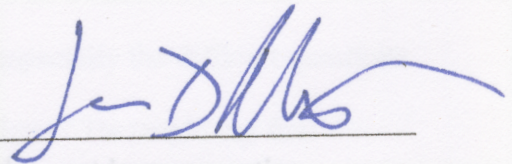
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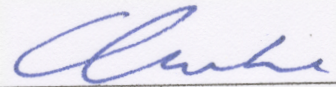
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For Maya Lynn—

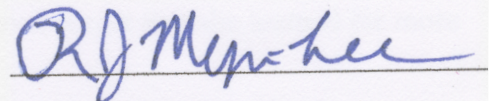
May you find your own path to the same ch... creation.



Jake D. Mattox, Ph.D.
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Acknowledgements

Many thanks to my committee: Dr. Jake Mattox, Dr. Bobby Meyer-Lee, and Dr. Chu He. Without their dedication, support, and superior instruction, I would have been unable to complete this project.

A special thanks to my project director Dr. Mattox. I am grateful for his academic insight regarding the research for this project; especially the difficult questions.

For Maya Lynn—

Above all, I appreciate his participation in all of the "firsts." He taught my first graduate class when I was terrified and could not fathom making it this far. For my first professional conference, I delivered a version of a paper created in one of his seminars. Lastly, I am grateful for his facilitation with my first fledgling attempt at scholarship—this thesis.

However, all of my academic achievement could not have occurred without the help and encouragement from my sister and finest friend, Lynnette Dicker. She was the one who reminded me that I was capable when it seemed impossible. I gratefully acknowledge all of the hours she spent soothing my anxieties; but more importantly, she always had time to listen to my ideas. And I will never forget that she learned far more about Chaucer than she had ever desired.

And last but by no means least, a thankful recognition of my parents Gerald and Judith Bucksberg; without their solid foundation, love, and financial support, I would not have fulfilled this dream.

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"Let the Islands be populated with Americans": Travel-Burlesque and U.S. Imperialism in Mark Twain's *Letters from Hawaii*

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later gathered and published as *Letters from Hawaii*, with this description of the sentiments of the passengers onboard the steamer *Ajax*: "We backed out from San

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“Let the Islands be populated with Americans”: Travel-Burlesque and U.S. Imperialism

Previous scholars in Mark Twain's *Letters from Hawaii* imperialism runs a wide spectrum from an avoidance of the subject to a critical analysis of even his earliest

writing. Mark Twain begins his series of 1866 travel letters from the Sandwich Islands, later gathered and published as *Letters from Hawaii*, with this description of the sentiments of the passengers onboard the steamer *Ajax*: “We backed out from San Francisco at 4 p.m., all full—some full of tender regrets for severed associations, others full of buoyant anticipations of a pleasant voyage and a revivifying change of scene, and yet others full of schemes for extending their business relations and making larger profits” (3-4). Twain as the narrator of these letters includes himself by using the pronoun “we,” but it is not clear in which of these categories he would place himself. As the author, it seems that he places himself in a fourth category: an outside observer, what he would later describe as an “unassuming stranger” for he isn’t one of the sailors, missionaries, government officials, Kanakas (indigenous Hawaiians), or Chinese “coolies” that make up the population of the island (42). Nor is he just a tourist intent on a “pleasant” and “revivifying” journey. Perhaps the category of a businessman would come closest to what resulted from this voyage for Twain. These letters commissioned by the *Sacramento Union* provided the material for his successful lecture “Our Fellow Savages of the Sandwich Islands” and the final chapters for his 1872 travel book about the western frontier, *Roughing It* (Day x-xi). Perhaps Twain avoids placing himself in any one of these categories because he represents aspects of all of these motivations for traveling to Hawaii. It is this sense

of Twain occupying multiple roles that productively informs an analysis of his text and provides a framework for the exploration of the relationship between his work and the discourses of U.S. expansion.

Previous scholarship exploring Mark Twain and U.S. imperialism runs a wide spectrum from an avoidance of the subject to a critical analysis of even his earliest writings. At times, Twain seems to be reductively celebrated for his humor as entertainment, but not for the complex engagement with national issues that this use of humor often reveals. Conversely, Twain scholars will often recognize that his work is anti-imperial, but usually the texts discussed are those later works criticizing the U.S. involvement in the Philippines or Twain's rejection of European colonialism in Africa¹. Scholars often point to these obviously anti-imperial texts as the only evidence of Twain's engagement with the discourses of U.S. imperialism.² However, Amy Kaplan argues that Twain was both influenced by and engages with U.S. imperialism at the beginning of his career in her article "Imperial Triangles: Mark Twain's Foreign Affairs" (1997). She claims that *Letters from Hawaii* engages with imperialist and nationalist ideology linking Twain's personal stake as an author with a national stake in expansion to the Hawaiian Islands.³ Her argument that the foreign space of Hawaii is significant to

¹ As one recent example, Malcolm Jones in "Our Mysterious Stranger" (2010) mentions that Twain's *Following the Equator* is a "jeremiad against colonialism fitfully disguised as a lighthearted travel book," but he fails to make the distinction that it is not just abstract colonialism or European colonialism, but U.S. expansion that Twain criticizes as well.

² However, John Carlos Rowe argues that Twain's anti-imperialist work appears not only in his later travel books, but in the novel *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889). Rowe claims in *Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism: from the Revolution to World War II* (2000), that this novel both explores and critiques nineteenth century American technological and economic expansion that acted as catalyst for a global expansion.

³ For Kaplan, Twain uses this foreign space as a means to set himself up as an American author by his use of Hawaii as the inspiration and material from his travels. He also seeks to distinguish an American economic and political involvement in a foreign space as masculine and strong contrasted with the feminine, weak European version. She argues that Hawaii is a space

both Twain as an author, but more importantly as a reflection of the postbellum nation, is compelling because it not only brings attention to Twain's engagement with the discourses of U.S. imperialism at the beginning of his career, but points to the expansionist practices and ideology of the U.S. long before the usually agreed upon imperialist time period of the U.S.'s involvement in the Philippines.⁴

Drawing upon and extending Kaplan's suggestions about American identity, I argue that *Letters from Hawaii* as travel writing, specifically "travel-burlesque," simultaneously supports the imperialist use of foreign space to solve domestic, economic issues and critiques this expansionist culture.⁵ In my analysis, I draw upon Franklin Rogers, whose *Mark Twain's Burlesque Patterns* (1960), suggests that Twain's burlesque is a "humorous imitation and exaggeration of the conventions in plot, characterization, and style peculiar to [travel writing]" (v).⁶ Applying and adapting the term travel-

where the postbellum recapitulation of the ideology and function of the American slavery system can happen through the native Hawaiians as the new "nonwhite" labor force. Kaplan differentiates her work from previous scholars in the exploration of Twain as a national author by her suggestion that "Twain's career and reception as a national author were shaped by particular kinds of transnational travel made possible by the changing U.S. borders of imperial expansion, as much as by the conflicts delimited by its enclosed boundaries of the national and the local" (333).

⁴ Rowe suggests, "As scholars have pointed out, most of Twain's anti-colonial zeal dates from the late 1890s and early 1900s, provoked by such international crises as the Spanish-American War (1898), the Boxer Rebellion in China (1900), and the Boer War in South Africa (1899-1902). Twain's rage over U.S. annexation of the Philippines in "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" (1901) and "A Defense of General Funston" (1902), the cruel despotism of Belgium's Leopold II in the Congo Free State in "King Leopold's Soliloquy" (1905), and Czar Nicholas II's exploitation of Russians, Poles, and Finns in "The Czar's Soliloquy" (1905) belongs to the historical period in which 'imperialism' had entered the popular vocabulary as a term of opprobrium" (122).

⁵ According to *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*: "A burlesque may implicitly criticize its target, but it also thereby reasserts, implicitly, the target's importance" (152).

⁶ Rogers does not make any claims about the relationship between Twain's text and nineteenth century U.S. political or cultural concerns. He argues that these letters about the Sandwich Islands are an "alternation of fact and fiction" both within individual letters and separating the series into "fictional narratives" or "factual reports" (38) Rogers breaks down the

burlesque to Twain's *Letters* furthers both past scholarship and current work on Twain as a quintessential American author, for it allows us to see the complex ways that his travel writing both supports and critiques U.S. imperialist discourses in the mid-nineteenth century.⁷ In the first part of this essay, I provide historical context of Hawaii during the second half of the nineteenth century.⁸ In the second part, I suggest that Twain's text employs and burlesques the writing conventions of comforting, entertaining, and informing the reader to both support and critique expansion to Hawaii as a way to provide economic opportunity for Americans.⁹ However, this expansion is also troubling because it may "corrupt" the fresh paradise of the Islands. The third part focuses on

25 letters which he groups according to the alteration of the fictive Mr. Brown character with a "factual" report. These "factual" letters report on: the steamer *Ajax* which transported Twain, the disaster of the *Hornet* where the sailors lost at sea happened to be rescued during Twain's visit, and provided Twain with an exclusive newspaper scoop of this shipwreck, the whaling industry, sugar plantations, and Hawaiian government and culture.

⁷ It is helpful to use Rowe's definition of imperialism in *Literary Culture and U.S. Imperialism: from the Revolution to World War II* (2000): "many of [America's] imperial ventures had more to do with controlling trade routes and markets than with the inherent value of the land that happened to lie along the way" (9). Thus, U.S. imperialism is the desire for foreign space, not necessarily to possess the land itself, but to use the foreign resources and labor for economic or technological advancement; as noted by Kaplan, it concerns the solution of domestic, national issues and not just territorial expansion. In Kaplan's *Left Alone with America: The Absence of Empire in the Study of American Culture* (1993), she suggests, "Imperialism as a political or economic process abroad is inseparable from the social relations and cultural discourses of race, gender, ethnicity, and class at home. The binary opposition of the foreign and the domestic is itself imbued with the rhetoric of gender hierarchies that implicitly elevate the international to a male, public realm, and relegate the national to a female, private sphere" (16).

⁸ I use John Carlos Rowe's model of providing a background of the cultural history of the text in order to "locate the texts historically and culturally as contributions to the public debates that have motivated these texts. In this context literary explication respects the complexity of ideological discursive formation, which includes the roles played by literary texts and culture in general" (16).

⁹ Jeffery Melton in *Mark Twain, Travel Books and Tourism: The Tide of a Great Popular Movement* (2002), suggests that travel literature as a genre had strong conventions that many authors upheld with three central requirements: to instruct, to entertain, and to comfort (30). While it is useful to use Melton's discussion of the conventions of travel writing, it must be acknowledged that he doesn't explore Twain's first travel writings. He does claim that travel writing is connected to imperialism, but only as applied to Twain's last published travel book, *Following the Equator* (1897).

Twain's burlesque and use of the conventions of instructing and comforting the reader about the whaling industry to both reinforce and challenge the naturalization of the use of the foreign space to solve domestic concerns through market expansion. The text suggests that while the whaling industry in Hawaii can provide a solution to the domestic, economic concerns of the U.S., moving the center of the whaling industry suggests the solution to these same domestic concerns could happen within the nation. And finally, in the last section, I claim Twain's "factual" report about the sugar plantation is a place where the text uses the travel writing conventions of instructing and entertaining the reader. Twain seems to champion the use of the "coolie" labor system and uphold the nineteenth century racial hierarchy, but the text also undercuts these claims. Therefore, I argue, Twain both employs and burlesques travel writing conventions and as a result, the text both reinforces and challenges imperial discourses.

Just as Twain reported there were different types of people traveling to Hawaii—tourists, whaling men, and businessmen—his letters take on the voices of these travelers. But Twain's text is complicated because these letters are not necessarily celebrating the motivation or agenda of the particular traveler. But it is through these impersonations, I argue, that the text engages with the discourses of expansion. Despite Twain's suggestion that the Islands should be "populated with Americans," this evocation is complicated because it is unclear what relationship these Americans individually, or the U.S. nation, should have with Hawaii (*Letters* 21). It seems that Twain's reluctance to place himself in a traveling category as tourist, whaler, or businessman is logical because it allows him to take on all of the roles; but more importantly, his text also cannot be categorized as either fully supporting or rejecting U.S. imperialism.

Nineteenth Century Hawaii: Imperialists' Playground

The writings of travelers and explorers are closely linked to expansion and imperialism, as Mary Louise Pratt explored in her seminal work, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992). She suggests that European travelers' writing reflects the "contact zone" which is the "social space where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" (4). Although Pratt explores European travel writing, she claims travel books create "domestic subjects" whereby the writers produced the rest of the world to the metropolitan European readership. As Pratt has argued, travel writing is not just about an individual's journey, but the evidence of imperialism in operation; for travel writing reflects the intersection between the expanding imperial nation and the indigenous population. This expansion was often justified by the prevailing racial hierarchy of the nineteenth century, what Reginald Horsman, in *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (1981), defines as the Anglo-Saxon or "white" category at the top with descending rank according to one's proximity to African American slaves, either through skin color or by "barbaric," "childlike," or generally "uncivilized" culture (298-299).

One "contact zone" of the nineteenth century was the island nation of Hawaii. Since its "discovery" by Captain Cook in 1778, Hawaii was increasingly influenced by imperialist nations; the U.S. was in competition with Great Britain and France to establish a political and economic foothold in the islands. Twain's description of the Hawaiian flag is particularly telling:

[The Hawaiian flag] is suggestive of the prominent political elements of the Islands. It is part French, part English, part American, and is Hawaiian in general. The union is the English cross; the remainder of the flag (horizontal stripes) looks American, but has a blue French stripe in addition to our red and white ones. The flag was gotten up by foreign legations in council with the Hawaiian Government. The eight stripes refer to the eight islands which are inhabited; the other four are barren rocks incapable of supporting a population. (*Letters* 25-26)

Twain claims that the flag is “generally Hawaiian,” but cannot hide from the elements that were suggested by foreign influence. This flag is a tangible representation of the nations that are interested in controlling Hawaii, both politically and economically. As Ralph Kuykendall in, *The Hawaiian Kingdom: 1854-1874 Twenty Critical Years* (1966), explains, Great Britain, France, and the U.S. all had an interest in the island nation: King Kamehameha IV was thought to have been influenced by the British government, France’s treaty sought to limit the sovereignty of Hawaii, and the U.S. pursued the annexation of Hawaii (37-38). Under King Kamehameha IV, Hawaii’s foreign policy consisted of three parts:

first to substitute for pending annexation project a treaty of reciprocity between the United States and Hawaii; second, to get a satisfactory treaty with France and place the relations between the two countries on a cordial footing; third, to obtain a joint guarantee of Hawaii’s independence by the great maritime powers, Great

Britain, France, the United States, and possibly Russia, by means
of a tripartite or quadripartite treaty (Kuykendall 38).

The Hawaiian Islands seemed to be a prize that many nations sought to acquire. In particular, the U.S. had a large stake in establishing a political and economic friendship with this Pacific neighbor. Although the U.S. may not have voted to annex this territory, economic interests were certainly at stake in establishing a U.S. foothold, possibly with the intention that these other European powers lose their influence with the Hawaiian government.

One of the primary reasons to visit Hawaii in the early nineteenth century was as part of a missionary organization; many went to convert the “heathens.” One example of popular literature, “The Sandwich Isles,” a poem published in the *Cleveland Observer* in March 20, 1839 represented some of the prevailing attitudes regarding the success of the mission work in Hawaii prior to Twain’s visit. According to this poem, the American Missionaries had succeeded in not only converting the indigenous Hawaiians to Christianity, but compares this conversion to enlightening and nurturing a poor child: “The Sandwich Isles! where from the breast/The mother plucked her clinging child” (“The Sandwich Islands” 25-26). According to this way of thinking, through Christianity, Hawaii can begin her history. Before the missionaries’ arrival, the native Hawaiian existed in the darkness of not only sin, but pre-history. Now the natives could be brought into the “light” of development and civilization. The final stanza of the poem suggests the victory of the mission work:

The Sandwich Isles!—each laden breeze
Brings tokens of rich fragrance there;
I scent, across the surging seas,
The aroma of new born prayer.

O give me wings! my soul would flee
 To regions where the Spirit smiles;
 'Tis midnight here—'tis morn with ye,
 The Sandwich Isles! the Sandwich Isles! (33-40)

Because of the influence of illuminating Christianity brought by the white, American missionaries, now the resources and landscape of the islands can be “right.” The “rich” fragrant breezes of paradise can only now be appropriate because the native Hawaiians receive the blessing of the “Spirit.” Thus, the motivation for missionaries to travel to Hawaii may have seemed to be an evangelistic desire to bring people to Christianity, but this motivation is also linked to the expansionist discourse of empire through the poem’s suggestion that the Kanakas were not “civilized” until their conversion, thereby justifying U.S. expansion to the islands.

At times the missionaries’ agenda of religious “salvation” conflicted with the other foreigners’ economic motivations for visiting Hawaii. The whaling ships used the islands as a refueling station to pick up needed supplies, but often sailors were scolded for contributing to the delinquency of the natives. The *New-York Spectator* reports on May 18, 1827, “Many whalemens besides vessels engaged in other pursuits, visit the islands, and the ship-masters oppose the missionaries because they endeavor as far as possible, to prevent the native females from going or being taken on board of vessels for the purposes of prostitution” (“The Sandwich Islands”). It seems that the missionaries not only had to “save” the pagans, but to rescue them from unscrupulous whites. Similarly, the U.S. government had an agenda to protect the Hawaiian Islands. In an official letter, dated December 14, 1842, to the Hawaiian government, Secretary of State, Daniel Webster guaranteed that the U.S. would “save” Hawaii from foreign powers “and

that no power ought either to take possession of the islands as a conquest, or for the purpose of colonization" ("The Sandwich Islands" *Ohio Statesman*). This was in response to the brief four month British occupation of Hawaii in 1843 (Kuykendall and Day 67). What is suggested in the letter is that the U.S. has the most interest in the Islands because of the close proximity to the continental U.S. and that the majority of the vessels that visit the islands belong to the U.S. ("The Sandwich Islands" *Ohio Statesman*). The U.S. had a significant stake in keeping Hawaii independent in order to establish trade lines, especially because steamships, like the one that transported Twain, were able to make the journey from California to Hawaii in such a short time. These ships transported the missionaries, whale men, and the business men with different motivations, but similar searches for opportunity.

The possible categories of visiting foreigners not only refer to a possible individual's motivation for travel, but provide a framework to discuss the use of a foreign space in order to provide solutions for U.S. nineteenth century concerns regarding the economic future of the nation. This historical information provides context in which to explore Twain's text, but more importantly, this supports the claim that travel writing, and by extension, all literature, is not written in a vacuum but is an active part of a cultural and political landscape in the time period in which it was created.

"Now don't any of you gentlemen get my bones mixed up with yours so that you can't tell them apart.": Tourist Burlesque

Twain's first role in *Letters* is that of a tourist; he begins his travel letters with a description of the Island, much like any traveler would. However, although Twain

utilizes the travel writing conventions of entertaining and comforting the reader, he burlesques these same conventions; this form of humor allows the text to simultaneously support and undermine the discourse of U.S. imperialist expansion across the Pacific. For the nature of a literary burlesque is a criticism of that form of literature, but through this parody, there is the inevitability of strengthening or upholding that same form. Because burlesque depends on the audience's familiarity with the imitated or mocked form of literature, the assumption is that the mocked form is already an accepted genre. Furthermore, it may seem logical to suggest that if travel writing supports imperialist discourses, then the use of travel writing conventions would reinforce imperialist discourses. Conversely, the burlesque of these conventions would then seem to challenge imperialist discourses. However, Twain's text is more complex; his letters support and critique imperialist discourses, but this occurs both through the use of travel writing conventions and the burlesque of this genre.

One use of travel writing conventions in the text is through Twain's comparison of Hawaii and California. As Melton suggests, one of the conventional ways to make a foreign space comfortable to the traveler is to transpose the known space onto the unknown.¹⁰ This is comforting not only to Twain touring this new land with foreign people and geography, but it acts as a way for the American reader to interact with Twain the traveler. In the March 1866 letter, he has an extensive comparison between Honolulu and San Francisco in which he creates a dichotomy between the foreign space of Hawaii and the national space of California; Honolulu fairs more favorably in the description:

¹⁰ Melton claims that entertaining the reader meant exposure to the "exotic" and "strange" practices of different cultures. This type of entertainment leads to the need for the reader to be comforted. For "travel, with all its promises of encountering the excitements of the new, exotic, and strange, can also initiate a fear of those encounters" (Melton 44).

In place of the grand mud-colored brown stone fronts of San Francisco, I saw neat white cottages, with green window shutters; in place of front yards like billiard tables with iron fences around them, I saw those cottages surrounded by ample yards...In place of the customary infernal geranium languishing in dust and general debility on tin-roofed rear additions or in bedroom windows, I saw luxurious banks and thickets of flowers...In place of those vile, tiresome, stupid, everlasting goldfish, wiggling around in glass globes and assuming all shades and degrees of distortion through the magnifying and diminishing qualities of their transparent prison houses, I saw cats. (30)

Honolulu is a fresh paradise in comparison to old worn-out San Francisco. Thus, Hawaii is a space of new possibilities, the new frontier, replacing the previous western frontier of California. San Francisco has become too settled and too worn-out and as a result, has become a prison. Even the flora and fauna is trapped; the geranium is potted and the goldfish swims in an enclosed space. So in this way, even while suggesting that the new space is familiar, Hawaii is more favorable because of the freedom and freshness of the environment. Even his description of pets is telling: San Francisco has the tame goldfish that just swims patiently round and round its bowl, but a cat can move freely and more importantly hunt freely. Both of these animals are domesticated, but the cat has retained more of its feral qualities and calls no one its master as the island is populated by “ platoons of cats, companies of cats, regiments of cats, armies of cats, multitudes of cats, millions of cats, and all of them sleek, fat, lazy, and sound asleep” (30-31).

The militant language used in describing the number of cats contrasts sharply with their non-action; this military language could reflect the so newly ended Civil War that had been so largely part of U.S. concern. Nevertheless, these cats are well fed and content. Similarly, the indigenous Hawaiian women sit “on the ground in the shade of corner houses, gazing indolently at whatever or whoever happened along” (31). This description seems to suggest that these women are “lazy” and reinforces the representation that the Kanakas have a lack of industry and ambition. However, this representation is then contrasted by Twain’s report of seeing “dusky native women sweeping by, free as the wind, on fleet horses and astraddle, with gaudy riding sashes streaming like banners behind them” (31). Nevertheless, these women also are described in military terms like a cavalry charge as they ride with streaming banners. The women may be riding, but they are not doing anything that is any more constructive than the sleeping cats. In Twain’s report, both the cats and women represent the paradoxical paradise of Hawaii: they are “free” because they are “lazy.” And as these women and cats are part of the island landscape, Twain celebrates the freshness of Hawaii because of the difference from San Francisco, which has become a place saturated by commerce.

But this possible paradise is troubled by the American business opportunity Hawaii represents. In his March 1866 letter, Twain describes his exploration of the volcano, Diamond Head located on the island of Oahu, with his truculent horse and a party of travelers. His account burlesques the “romantic” description of the landscape and the perfection of the outing.¹¹ For his party ends up being trapped on a hillside, and

¹¹ Here Twain burlesques the convention of entertaining the reader. Melton argues, “One of the most popular entertainment conventions was the romantic reverie” and “Sentimental, exceedingly ornate descriptions of natural and human-made landmarks were standard fare” (37, 39).

receives help navigating the descent from a native Hawaiian. He confesses that being rescued has enabled him to a poetic description:

The moon rose up, and flooded mountain and valley and ocean
with silvery light, and I was not sorry we had lately been in
trouble, because the consciousness of being safe again raised our
spirits and made up more capable of enjoying the beautiful scene
than we would have been otherwise. I never breathed such a soft,
delicious atmosphere before, nor one freighted with such rich
fragrance. A barber shop is nothing to it. (59)

He acknowledges the beauty of the landscape and the appeal to the senses only after acknowledging the comfort and safety both physical and emotionally. Then he adds the mundane comparison to the ordinary act of shaving. This mention of a barber shop also adds an element of economic transaction, for one must pay for the services of a barber. According to the conventions of travel writing, this acknowledgement of the physical body undermines the romantic description of the landscape. This burlesque of the romantic beauty of the landscape through the use of a business act, not only mocks the conventions of travel writing, but suggests that the act of traveling cannot be separated from the act of economic exchange. Thus, this burlesque reflects the imperialistic force of nineteenth century U.S.: this foreign space is simultaneously a beautiful paradise and an opportunity for business. Through this description of the landscape, Twain both uses the conventions of travel writing regarding the comfort of the traveler, by comparing Honolulu to the familiar San Francisco, and burlesques the convention of entertainment by focusing on the mundane, the physical body, and business.

Twain continues by describing the traveling party's actions with the use of the convention of comforting the reader. After they are rescued from the hillside, the party finds themselves on a sandy beach covered with human remains. Twain and his party then proceed to gather the bones to take with them:

Presently we came to a place where no grass grew—a wide expanse of deep sand. They said it was an old battleground. All around everywhere, not three feet apart, the bleached bones of men gleamed white in the moonlight. We picked them up for mementoes. I got quite a number of arm bones and leg bones—of great chiefs, maybe, who had fought savagely in that fearful battle in the old days...and wore the choicest of [the bones] out on Oahu [his horse] afterward, trying to make him go. All sorts of bones could be found except skulls; but a citizen said, irreverently, that there had been an unusual number of “skull hunters” there lately—a species of sportsmen I had never heard before. (59)

This is an amusing anecdote of the party collecting old bones, but this humor operates as a form of comfort for Twain the traveler. One way for a tourist to make the “foreign” and “exotic” more familiar is to collect mementos or souvenirs of their journey.¹² Therefore, Kaplan suggests, “The collector may not fix the context of the other as unchanging, but instead may disembody that context to attest to his own dislocation and to his effort to usurp that space with the marks of his own presence” (“Imperial Triangles” 339). She points to both Twain and the nation as using these collections not

¹² Kaplan addresses this same moment in Twain's text, but she describes this feeling by the author of discomfort by being in a new space as “dislocation.” She argues that “dislocation” can be relieved by the collection of mementos or souvenirs (338).

with attention to a local historical context, but as a way of shaping the identity of an individual author and the U.S. nation. However, market logic also affects the collecting of bones in this foreign space.

What Kaplan does not recognize is that Twain, unlike the others in his party, uses the bones not as souvenirs, but for more practical purposes. He explains that he must use his best thigh bones as a riding crop. He “wears out the choicest” on making his horse obey. Then Twain reports the party’s conversation about the bones:

A gentleman said: “Give me some of your bones, Miss Blank; I’ll carry them for you”...Such observations as these fell from the lips of ladies with reference to their queer newly-acquired property: “Mr. Brown, will you please hold some of my bones for a minute?” And, “Mr. Smith, you have got some of my bones...Now don’t any of you gentleman get my bones all mixed up with yours so that you can’t tell them apart.” (59-60)

Twain assures the reader that while the description of this scene may seem “irreverent,” the party involved was merely discussing the collection of these bones in “a business way and with no intention of making sport of the remains” (60). Twain’s collection is indeed “dislocated” from its historical context, after all, he can only speculate if his collected thigh bones were from a chief. But the new purpose for these mementos is solely practical and related to “property” and “business.” Thus, the Islands are a place of opportunity for business, thereby supporting the discourse of market expansion.

Although Twain's text argues that business expansion may be valuable for American business opportunity, the U.S. expanding trans-Pacific may "corrupt" the indigenous people and may also "ruin" the paradise and freedom of the Islands. Here Twain is his most complicated: within one paragraph Twain burlesques and employs the conventions of travel writing, and consequently, his text simultaneously upholds and critiques the discourse of U.S. expansion. This upholding and critiquing happens when Twain reports his evidence that the Civil War and nineteenth century popular culture has reached across the Pacific:

The popular-song nuisance follows us here. In San Francisco it used to be "Just Before the Battle, Mother," every night and all night long. Then it was "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." After that it was "Wearin' of the Green." And last and most dreadful of all, came the calamity of "While We Were Marching Through Georgia." It was the last thing I heard when the ship sailed, and it gratified me to think I should hear it no more for months. And now, here at dead of night, at the very outpost and fag-end of the world, on a little rock in the middle of a limitless ocean, a pack of dark-skinned savages are tramping down the street singing it was a vim and an energy that makes my hair rise!—singing it in their own barbarous tongue! They have got the tune to perfection—otherwise I never would have suspected that "Waikiki lantani oe Kaa hooly wooly wawhoo" means, "While We Were Marching Through Georgia." If it would have been all the

¹³ In *Songs of the Civil War* (1960), Irwin Silber states, "Since Sherman had started out from Atlanta with the intention of having his army live off the land, there was no doubt that

same to General Sherman, I wish he had gone around by the way
of the Gulf of Mexico, instead of marching through Georgia. (65)

In this account, Twain burlesques the convention of entertaining the reader, but uses the convention of informing the reader. The text burlesques the convention of entertainment because although this is a humorous tale about his experience, it is not a discussion of the native culture or “authentic/exotic” behaviors or rituals of the Hawaiians. Also, it is a use of informing the reader because while it may seem that Twain is mocking the Hawaiian language when he provides a phonetic description of what the song may have sounded to an English speaker, this “translation” reflects Twain’s desire to have his readers experience the Kanaka’s song. Twain provides a phonetic translation for many of the indigenous place names in *Letters*. However, because this is not an “authentic” Kanaka ritual, this is a direct reflection of the U.S. expansion during this time period; the military involvement of the Civil War is transferred to the Pacific through the reference of the General Sherman’s famous march through Georgia. Therefore, the Civil War was not solely a domestic concern as perhaps “the war between the states” would suggest.

However, the listing of these popular songs implies more than just Twain was a cantankerous hater of pop-culture. In this episode, the text challenges imperialist discourses. Twain’s last comment about wishing that Sherman had “gone around by way of the Gulf of Mexico” suggests that the Northern point of view may be troubling.

Although it may be debated about how violent and extreme Sherman’s troops were, the marching Union Army had to find its provisions from the farms throughout the Georgian countryside.¹³ Nevertheless, Twain finds this song particularly “dreadful;” this could be

¹³ In *Songs of the Civil War* (1960), Irwin Silber states, “Since Sherman had started out from Atlanta with the intention of having his army live off the land, there was no doubt that

a critique of the Northern Army's behavior of fueling its mobility through the labor of the "native" Georgians. However, it is also a challenge of U.S. expansionist practices that are similarly fueled through the labor and resources found in a foreign territory. Thus, Twain's text seems to oppose expansion across the Pacific. As a result, the singing Kanakas have been corrupted by the Civil War and U.S. imperialism because they are singing a Civil War song of Northern expansion in their own language. The native culture is influenced by American culture, as Rowe has determined as the role that U.S. expansion often takes.¹⁴ But, this paragraph is also complicated because Twain's description of Hawaii as "the very outpost and fag-end of the world" and "a little rock" contradicts his previous description of the Island as a fresh, free place of business opportunity. It also may point to the hope of some Americans to preserve the "innocence" of the indigenous population, and seems to forecast Twain's anti-imperial argument of his essay "To the Person Sitting in Darkness" (1901). In this essay, Twain openly critiques the U.S. involvement in the Philippines and argues that it is incorrect and perhaps "un-American" to take over foreign territory in the name of "civilizing" or "converting" indigenous people. Thus, in this passage Twain both burlesques and uses travel writing conventions to critique the discourse of trans-Pacific U.S. expansion.

Therefore, use and burlesque of travel writing conventions is complicated in Twain's text. It would seem that as a tourist, his letters should only uphold the

Georgia would learn graphically the meaning of the General's famous remark that 'War is Hell!'... There is probably no Union song more thoroughly detested in the white South today than 'Marching Through Georgia.' Sherman's 'scorched earth' campaign through the heart of Dixie has left a long and bitter scar in Southern memories" (15-16).

¹⁴ Rowe argues that the U.S. often has "understood its foreign policies to be functions of its commercial ambitions" and "its ideological rationalization has always been to 'encourage free trade' and 'economic competition'—to export, in other words, the practices and values of laissez-faire capitalism to convert people into consumers and thereby expand markets" (xi).

imperialist discourse of expansion. And in some ways, according to Twain, Hawaii is the new “frontier” filled with numerous and equally attractive possibilities for relaxation and business opportunity. Even through the burlesque of the romantic description of the Island’s landscape the discourse of business expansion is supported. In his description of collecting souvenirs, the text upholds the idea that this foreign space is useful for business purpose. However, Twain’s role of tourist is not easily categorized even within a paragraph; the text subverts this market expansion by suggesting that this action may “corrupt” the paradise of Hawaii.

“I hove on my dress and cleared for the market”: Domesticity and Foreign Markets

While Twain does not impersonate the role of a whaling man, he creates a burlesque character, Mrs. Captain Jollopson, through whom he is able to explore the role of a whaler. This episode does not burlesque domesticity, but engages with how domestic concerns are connected to a foreign space. It is through the burlesque and use of the travel writing conventions of informing and comforting the reader that I suggest that *Letters* reinforces the imperialist discourse of the use of the domestic as in household or “women’s realm” to support U.S. market expansion. This link between domestic and foreign is further engaged through Twain’s segue into a “factual” report of the whaling industry with a comparison between Honolulu and San Francisco. Although Rogers suggests that Twain invents the burlesque character of Mr. Brown, Twain’s use of

burlesque is not limited to exchanges between Twain and Brown.¹⁵ For Twain’s serious

¹⁵ Rogers suggests that Twain structures his travel-burlesque through a humorous-serious pairing and uses the term “narrative plank” to describe the set up of Twain’s Hawaiian letters (26). He borrows this term from Twain’s description of his lectures where he refers to the speech as a holey plank of wood in which Twain can insert either humorous or serious segments

treatment of the whaling industry is prefaced by a fictitious, humorous interaction with this sailor's formidable wife in which Mrs. Captain Jollopson relates her day's events. Using Kaplan's argument concerning domesticity can provide an important element to this burlesque character because through this character we can see the link of the domestic with the foreign. According to Kaplan, the domestic takes on a dual meaning that suggests that discussing U.S. imperialism has as much to do with national domestic concerns as with foreign territory in question. Domestic refers not only to the affairs of an individual household and specifically those of the "woman's sphere," but those of the nation as well.

Turning to the text, Twain provides us with one of his most famous stylistic choices: "local color" or regionalism. His character, Mrs. Captain Jollopson, recounts her day as if she were a captain of the whaling vessel, instead of the land dwelling spouse, through the use of nautical terms and expressions. She describes what happened to her as she readied herself for a large shopping excursion to stock up on provisions in anticipation of her husband's return from his voyage at sea. However, she not only speaks as if she were Captain, but also as if her body were that of a ship. She is almost to the market when she is jostled and knocked down by a drunken sailor:

I hove on my dress and hove down toward the market, and while I
was laying off and on before the post office, here comes a

depending upon the audience. In order for Twain to achieve this humorous-serious pairing, Rogers argues that Twain forms a character axis of a sophisticated gentleman and a low brow companion; he uses "Mr. Twain" as the literate gentleman and "Mr. Brown" as his boorish traveling acquaintance. Also, Twain invents a narrator who is sophisticated and sentimental at the beginning of the journey, but who is unsophisticated and unregenerate at the moment of narration: "The narrative itself, the record of the transforming experiences, consists of a series of contrasts between the expectations of the inexperienced narrator (actually burlesques of the literature forming expectations) and the disillusioning actuality" (27).

shipkeeper round the corner three sheets in the wind and his deadlights stove in, and I see by the way he was bulling that if he didn't sheer off and shorten sail he'd foul my larboard stuns'l-boom, which I had my basket on...his judgment had fetched away in the meantime, and so he steered bad, and was making latitude all the time when he ought to have been making longitude, and here he was to wind'ard of me, but making so much leeway that—well, you see how it was. I backed off fast as I could, and sung out to him to port his helm, but it warn't no use; he'd everything drawing and I had considerable sternway, and he just struck me a little abaft the beam, and down I went, head on, and skunned my elbow! (78)

Following this tale, Twain provides a translation of some of these nautical terms and expressions, but doesn't explain the references of comparing the body to a ship. It is particularly important that this body is female: Mrs. Captain Jollopsen's arm is a ship part and she tries to warn the man in a way that ships communicate with each other on the open sea. She tries to "sing out" to the man to watch out but he is moving as a ship would and strikes her arm and down she goes. And it is equally important that she is trying to complete a "typical" domestic chore: shopping at the market.

This treatment of a domestic scene of a woman shopping in preparation for her husband's return is a burlesque of the travel writing convention of informing the reader. It is probable that Twain could have described a conversation with a real whaling captain, but he chose to create a humorous character who happens to be on her way to the market fulfilling her role as a "dutiful wife" stocking the household's cupboards. It would seem

logical that the use of this burlesque would signal a critique of imperialist discourse; however, this burlesque actually supports the naturalization of the use of foreign space to resolve domestic issues. This burlesque represents the relationship between the domestic or “women’s sphere” and the concerns of the nation. As Kaplan suggests, women’s work at home “performs two interdependent forms of national labor; it forges the bonds of internal unity while impelling the nation outward to encompass the globe” (“Manifest Domesticity” 587). Twain’s tale of Mrs. Captain Jollopson provides a sense of national unity through the domestic chores of a wife caring for her husband, but he chooses to convey this episode through the expansionist language of sea travel. By placing this conventionally domestic scene in the foreign space of Hawaii, the text further extends the link of the domestic to the foreign. For all of its exotic landscape and native population, Hawaii becomes a place of U.S. domestic concerns in both of the ways that Kaplan suggests. This letter also literally links the domestic realm with the market concerns of the nation; Mrs. Captain Jollopson is shopping for provisions for her husband’s return from his whaling ventures. Therefore, the necessities of the household are the necessities of the nation.

After Twain burlesques the travel writing convention of informing the reader through the tale of Mrs. Captain Jollopson, he then uses the convention of comfort within the same letter. Following Twain’s interpretation of the whaling terms used to describe Mrs. Captain Jollopson’s domestic chores, he gives a lesson about language and its ability to both distinguish as well as unite:

The above chapter is intended to give you a somewhat exaggerated idea of the technicalities of conversation in Honolulu—bred from

the great whaling interest which centers here, and naturally infused into the vocabulary of the place. Your favorite California similes were bred from the technicalities of surface mining; those of Washoe come from the profound depths of the 'main lead,' and those of the Honoluluian were born of whalebone, blubber, and the traffic of the seas. (85)

This paragraph is a direct appeal to the audience of the *Sacramento Union* readers by giving them a connection to what they find familiar and therefore upholds the convention of providing comfort as noted by Melton. The white businessmen readers could connect the Hawaiian whaling dialect with familiar Californian idioms or regional dialect. This familiarizing is also part of the "factual" reporting of travel writing. It makes the unknown understandable for the reader by local analogies (Melton 32). However, the idioms that Twain reports as authentic to the city of Honolulu are those from the whaling industry, not the indigenous Kanakas. It seems that the text seeks to make as this foreign land or language familiar, thereby it also makes it part of the reader's world. This has a literal consequence: the foreign space is made part of the U.S. territory, not officially or politically, but becomes part of the "imagined community."¹⁶ The reader becomes familiar with the space through the vicarious participation in traveling with the author. Also, the reader begins to imagine that through the traveling of American citizens, this unknown or foreign space becomes as familiar as their own backyards. Thus, through the

¹⁶ Benedict Anderson argues in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (2006) that through the consumption of the newspaper, even though an individual reads it, a community is formed: "At the same time, the newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbors, is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life" (Anderson 35-36).

discussion of the similarities of the origins of the foundational industry of California and Hawaii, the island becomes an extension of the U.S. long before even the debate to include Hawaii into the union. Therefore, Twain employs the convention of comfort, which reinforces imperialist discourses.

In his next letter, printed in the next's day's edition of the paper following the account of Mrs. Captain Jollopson, Twain explains the economic situation of the whaling industry in Hawaii. Rogers does not acknowledge that these two letters could fall into his categorization of "humorous-serious" pairing; however, this letter with its "facts" regarding the whaling industry qualifies as upholding the informational conventions of travel writing. In this letter, Twain suggests that this industry would be much better served if located in San Francisco instead of Honolulu. Twain claims that Hawaii is the center of the whaling industry in the Pacific because Hawaii has laws that help the captain recruit sailors and keep them from disappearing. He argues that Hawaii also has protection for the captain from lawsuits brought by the sailors. It seems that in the U.S. lawsuits are rampant against whaling captains, and they must spend many months as their cases are tied up in court (*Letters* 91-93). Twain asks, "Then why does the whaling fleet rendezvous in a remote port in a foreign land, instead of a convenient one at home?" (93). Twain maintains that the whaling industry would be better served by moving the center to San Francisco.

Then Twain claims that the whaling industry, while certainly not operating in its golden age, could indeed become a vibrant, booming industry; this contradicts what was historically possible. Twain suggests that "in due time the icy solitudes of the north seas will once more become populous with the winged servants of commerce" (90). Despite

Twain's prediction, there is evidence that whaling industry was already in rapid decline. Eric Jay Dolin in *Leviathan: The History of Whaling in America* (2007), claims that the demand for whale products declined by the 1850s due to the rise in popularity of other animals products and kerosene; also, in 1861, the first discovery of oil in Pennsylvania cemented the doom of the whaling industry (335-336). The Civil War was also a factor in the decline in the whaling industry as whaling vessels were recruited to hunt ships instead of whales. As Kuykendall suggests, "Just when the whaling business was feeling the first effects of competition from the rising petroleum industry, the active whaling fleet was cut in half by the Civil War...Of those [ships] that continued their whaling activities, forty-six were destroyed by the Confederate cruisers *Alabama* and *Shenandoah*" (138). Perhaps the *Shenandoah* was the most "blood-thirsty" of the whaling vessels employed by the Confederacy, but the Union army was not above the use of whaling ships to blockade Southern harbors. Northern whaling ships, dubbed the "Stone Fleet" were purchased by the Union Army and loaded with granite or other rocks in order to be sunk in the harbor making it impassable by the Confederate fleet (Dolin 310). Consequently, Twain's assumption that whaling could return to providing a viable economic opportunity for California and the U.S. is not supported by the facts that the demand for whale products were in decline and that the whaling fleet was almost destroyed due to their involvement in the Civil War.¹⁷ Twain may have been wrong about the viability of

¹⁷ The whaling industry did have a brief resurgence that did move the center to San Francisco as Twain had suggested. What prompted this limited revitalization was women's fashion industry. The small waist was back in fashion and corsets were made with the whale's baleen (Dolin 365). This prompted an increase in the demand for whaling products that solely depended on the whim of the fashion industry. What made a woman proper, fashionable was a small, corseted waist and this increased the need for whaling as the resource necessary for this clothing style depended upon a part of the whale to produce the "boning" in the corset. Thus,

the resurgence of whaling, but his text suggests that by moving the center of the whaling industry, it may be a way to preserve the paradise of Hawaii by not expanding U.S. industry into Hawaiian space. More importantly, his claim that the center of the whaling industry should be moved to San Francisco challenges the naturalization of the use of the foreign space to solve domestic concerns. For moving the center to the continental U.S. would force the nation to solve the problems that caused the center to be Honolulu. San Francisco would need to find a means to reduce the lawsuits against ship captains that make it so unprofitable to do business in the U.S. Thus, while Twain seems, through the Mrs. Captain Jollopson episode, to support the use of foreign space to provide domestic solutions, his text also implies that the nation should be responsible for finding resolutions domestically.

That foreign spaces were linked to the consumption of goods is not surprising due to the production of goods that relied upon ingredients from foreign lands. Or possibly it was the draw to these “exotic” ingredients that was so appealing to the public. In the same issue in which the letter regarding Mrs. Captain Jollopson appears, there are advertisements for goods that are manufactured with ingredients that are found outside the continental U.S. Immediately following Twain’s letter in the “General Notices” section of the newspaper are the advertisements that offer solutions to some presumably common domestic concerns. For example, in order to strengthen a person’s weak constitution or cure digestive ills, Drake’s Plantation Bitters are advertised as being “made of pure St. Croix rum” and the “celebrated Calisaya bark” (“General Notices”).

domestic fashion was connected to U.S. expansion through the demand for products only found through a global market.

These ingredients are found in places that only a globally expanding nation would have access to: St. Croix is one of the Virgin Islands and Calisaya bark is a tree that grows in South America.¹⁸ This advertisement is followed by the anonymous testimonial: “In lifting the kettle from the fire, I scalded myself very severely—one hand almost to a crisp. The torture was unbearable. The Mexican Mustang Liniment relieved the pain almost immediately” (“General Notices”). Although the ingredients of this burn ointment are unknown, the name conjures images of the untamed Mexican wilderness. This section also features the advertisement for Lyon’s Extract of Pure Jamaica Ginger useful for treating “indigestion, nausea, heartburn, sick headache, cholera, morbus etc...” (“General Notices”). Again, this refers to a Caribbean Island ingredient. These advertisements all feature either ingredients or a reference to a foreign space outside of the continental U.S. And these places share a complicated history with the U.S. expansion into the Caribbean and Central and South America. The advertisements for these domestic household products are made desirable through the “exotic” foreign ingredients or through the conjuring of images of these spaces.

What happens when this market expansion necessarily includes “foreign” people is explored in Twain’s comparison of the behavior of the Chinese sugar plantation workers to those in employment in California. It seems that he is much impressed by the Hawaiian domestic servants: “Some of the women are being educated as house servants, and I observe that they do not put on airs, and ‘sass’ their masters and mistresses, and give daily notice to quit, and try to boss the whole concern, as the tribe [Chinese] do in California” (271). This is an example of Twain undercutting the informational

¹⁸ A common medicine made from Calisaya bark is quinine which is used for treating malaria (Negihina et al 497).

conventions of travel writing. It has nothing to do with scientific or geologic “facts,” and there is no description of indigenous culture or landscape. However, this passage also represents the mundane concerns of the domestic household. But once again, it is an example of the transpacific providing solutions for national concerns. It raises questions of not only how to deal with a truculent servant, but how the U.S. will deal with foreign “others” that must be included but simultaneously rejected. This exchange reflects the antebellum fears of not only what to do with the former African American slaves, but also the influx of “others” when the U.S. expanded its geographic borders. According to this logic, there can be a place for non-whites, but only as domestic servants that can be properly tamed and trained so that they will not “sass” their “masters and mistresses.” This training is part of non-whites knowing their “place” in the racial hierarchy which determines their “place” in the labor market.

In Twain’s text, domestic issues seem to have foreign solutions. The domestic concerns in *Letters* are all of those defined by Kaplan: market, household, and civilization. Therefore, what would be considered “women’s concerns” or the “feminine sphere” is not separate from the imperialist discourse of expansion because household servants and goods are acquired from foreign spaces. Through Twain’s burlesque of the convention of a “factual” report, his creation of Mrs. Captain Jollopson, the connection of domesticity and empire is apparent in the text because of its link between the global to the national. The whaling industry is a global enterprise which is connected to the domestic through the shopping of Mrs. Captain Jollopson, but also to the use of whaling ships in the Civil War, a national version of domestic violence. However, within Twain’s use of the convention of informing the reader about the whaling industry, there is a

challenge to this imperialist discourse through Twain's advice to move the whaling center to San Francisco; this move would force the nation to solve economic issues domestically, not rely on foreign spaces for resolution. Nevertheless, the whaling industry did provide goods for domestic consumption, and the advertisements featured in the newspaper persuaded readers to buy products that have a global ingredient list or an attraction because the products were "exotic." Finally, the "civilizing" attempt at domesticating foreigners is part of the global market for domestic servants and the laborers needed for economic growth in the postbellum U.S. Thus, in Twain's burlesque and use of the travel writing convention of informing the reader regarding the whaling industry in Hawaii, the text both supports and challenges the naturalization of the use of foreign space to further market expansion, thereby solving domestic economic concerns of the nineteenth century.

"Coolies for California": Foreign Labor Solutions

Another role Twain enacts is that of a businessman reporting on Hawaii's lucrative sugar industry. Here I argue that through this use of the travel writing conventions of informing and entertaining the reader, Twain's text both supports and challenges imperialist discourses. In his letter first published in the September 26, 1866 edition of the *Sacramento Union*, Twain carefully notes how the Hawaiian sugar plantation is far superior to the Louisiana sugar plantation.¹⁹ However, this is a place

¹⁹ Furthering Kaplan's argument, I suggest that her understanding of Twain's presentation of Hawaii as the new American South neglects the role of Chinese immigrants in the U.S. who were used as an inexpensive labor replacement for emancipated African American slaves. She suggests that "[Twain] reports on the sugar industry of Hawaii to argue that sugar is a much more lucrative venture than the slave economy of Louisiana...[However,] while Hawaii promises to replace the economic loss of slavery, it may also duplicate and recover its memorial and cultural

where Twain undercuts his own claims that seem to uphold a nineteenth century racial hierarchy, and embrace the use of “coolie” labor as a means to expand California’s economic development.

In *Letters*, foreign labor, specifically Chinese workers, could provide an economic answer for a domestic problem of rebuilding the U.S. recovering from the Civil War, and Hawaii could serve as a model. A labor shortage had been an issue for Hawaiian sugar plantations due to the dwindling native population, devastated by disease like leprosy. Hawaii turned to the importation of labor from China as a solution. In 1865, 500 Chinese were contracted to work the sugar plantations (Kuykendall 180-181). Many of these Chinese workers were found unsatisfactory by Hawaiians. Twain may have read the newspaper article that printed King Kamehameha IV’s speech to the legislature regarding the first batch of Chinese laborers: “[The Chinese laborers] are not so kind and tractable as it was anticipated they would be; and they seem to have no affinities, attractions or tendencies to blend with this, or any other race” (Kuykendall 76). In this speech the King describes the difficulty with the Chinese laborers “civility” and suggests that they were not the most desirable addition to the island. It is interesting that Twain mirrors not only the King’s opinion of the Chinese workers, but comments on their tractability. It is unclear if Twain remarks on these initial immigrants or on the entire Chinese labor population in Hawaii at the time when he visits. Nevertheless, his description of the Chinese plantation workers does reflect the pejorative labels that these workers received. In addition, he suggests that the Hawaiians were duped by importing these workers:

²⁸In *Hawaii: A History from Polynesian Kingdom to American State* (1961), Ralph
 value” (342-343). Kaplan claims that the foreign space of Hawaii enables both Twain and the
 U.S. to work out questions concerning the domestic treatment of recently emancipated African
 Americans following the Civil War.

Cheap labor had to be procured by some means or other, and so the Government sends to China... The Hawaiian agent fell into the hands of Chinese sharpers, who showed him some superb coolie samples and then loaded his ships with the scurviest lot of pirates that ever went unhung. Some of them were cripples, some were lunatics, some afflicted with incurable diseases, and nearly all were intractable, full of fight, and animated by the spirit of the very devil. (271)

In this description, Twain not only ridicules Chinese laborers, but the “Hawaiian agent” that was responsible for recruiting them.²⁰ It is impossible to speculate whether Twain means a Kanaka or one of the “haoles” or foreigners that populated the Islands. In a hierarchical sense, this representation depicts the Chinese as the lowest as they were in league with the devil; however, it seems that the Hawaiian agent’s status was also questionable as he allowed himself to be fooled by this bait and switch. If Twain was referring to a Kanaka, it is surprising he suggests that this indigenous Hawaiian could be duped in this manner because this is the very technique that Twain reports that the Kanaka horse sellers would use on unsuspecting Anglos. He claims that if the Kanaka “can get ahead of you in the horse business, he will take a genuine delight in doing it” (48). Twain continues: “This trait is characteristic of horse jockeys, the world over, is it not?” (48). These negative character traits may be universal; here, Twain reports on the

²⁰In *Hawaii: A History from Polynesian Kingdom to American State* (1961), Ralph Kuykendall and A. Grove Day report that the organization responsible for recruiting the Chinese laborers was the Royal Hawaiian Agricultural Society, “which included not only farmers, planters, and graziers but also businessmen and government officials (96). This organization would have been made up of indigenous Kanakas, but also a mix of Americans and Europeans.

Chinese and Kanaka swindlers, but later will discuss the profit hungry Anglo clergy who are supposedly morally superior.

Twain further comments on the aptitude of the indigenous Hawaiians for business. On the surface, according to the text, the Kanakas seem to not know how to make good use of their own natural resources. Here Twain uses the conventions of travel writing: the use of the local anecdote to relay information about the local culture.²¹ During his Kona island visit Twain remarks: "There are thousands of acres of cane land unoccupied on the island of Hawaii, and the prices asked for it ranges from one dollar to a hundred and fifty an acre. It is owned by common natives, and is lying 'out of doors.' They make no use of it whatever, and yet, here lately, they seem disinclined to either lease or sell it. I was frequently told this" (210). The indigenous Hawaiians don't realize the potential for the sugar plantation land, but do not want to get rid of it. But this use of convention is a place that I suggest both simultaneously supports and refutes the imperialist attitude of "rescuing" or "educating" the native population from their "ignorance" or lack of "civilization." On the one hand, Twain mentions that the Kanakas seem unable to grasp what a lucrative business opportunity they have in owning land that could be useful for sugar cane.

But then Twain undercuts his own statements by suggesting that this was a story that he was "frequently told." As he was not a speaker of the native Hawaiian language, it is almost certain that he did not hear this from the "common natives." So this

²¹ Through an "honest" narrator concerned with presenting an "authentic" telling of the journey, travel books were filled with purportedly factual information often gleaned from other traveler's previous published material. Travel writers would use geographical information as well as local history, legends, and anecdotes as a means of instructing the reader (Melton 30-32). Melton suggests that Twain uses a "narrative ploy of both following and mocking the conventions requiring instruction as a conscious strategy" (34). This mirrors Roger's explanation of Twain's humorous-serious technique of conveying factual information.

information comes from one of the other categories that we were introduced to in the beginning of his journey—missionaries, whaling men, government officials, or businessmen. These categories of men have a specific business agenda that often included acquiring land to build sugar plantations. Twain himself suggests that the clergymen on the island were interested in making a profit buying land from natives and then selling this land to foreigners (*Letters* 212). Through this undermining of Twain's inclusion of a local anecdote, the text suggests that perhaps this opinion about "ignorant" Kanakas is suspect. We then must examine the claim that the native population needs "civilizing:" a popular nineteenth century justification for the expansion into foreign territory. It seemed that even if there was a consensus about annexing a foreign territory, there was not an acceptance of "non-whites" as equal participants in the nation. This is an example of the contradictory ideology of U.S. expansion as noted by Horsman and Kaplan: the foreign territory is a wild, untamed place of economic opportunity but populated with "undesirable" people who could be "domesticated" by missionaries, but would still remain "racially inferior."²²

Twain's advocating the use of Chinese as contract laborers is another place where he both supports and subverts his own argument. Twain addresses and seems to champion the use of Chinese as contract laborers as was the practice in Hawaii: "The sooner California adopts coolie labor the better it will be for her. It cheapens no labor of men's hands save the hardest and most exhausting drudgery—drudgery which neither intelligence nor education are required to fit a man for—drudgery which all white men

²² Conventions of travel writing reflect this ideology as well. Melton notes, "American readers of the nineteenth century had a powerful need to define their place and identity in relation to—or, more frequently, in opposition to—the rest of the world. Travel books recorded and shared touring experiences that reflect this desire" (55).

abhor and are glad to escape from” (271-272). A person’s race, or perceived race, was an indicator of what kinds of employment could or should be allowed. This type of labor was fit for “others” located below white men found at the top of the racial hierarchy.

However, Twain complicates his support of “coolie” labor, undermining his own argument. In the September 26, 1866 issue of the *Sacramento Union*, Twain compares the Hawaiian industry with the sugar cane plantations of Louisiana: “In the Islands wild sugar land is worth from \$1 to \$20 an acre, mills and stock cost about the same as in Louisiana. The hire of each laborer is \$100 a year—just about what it used to cost to board and clothe and doctor a Negro—but there is no original outlay of \$500 to \$1,000 for the purchase of the laborer” (260). It is odd that Twain refers to these Louisiana sugar plantation slaves as “Negro laborers.” However, because this was written in 1866, there can be no mistaking that the “Negro laborers” mentioned were slaves. And this seems to be an appeal to market logic: Chinese workers cost so much less to hire than purchasing slaves; there is a significant savings with the Hawaiian method of “coolie” contract labor versus the recently abolished slavery system. On one level, this is where Twain follows the informational convention of travel writing with its corollary—the avoidance of anything disturbing. Certainly his readers would have been well aware that he was speaking about slavery, but Twain avoids the reference to the recent political and social upheaval of the Civil War, and the fact that these issues remain unresolved even after the Union’s reunification. As Melton suggests, “[R]eaders yearned to learn through travel and to be entertained along the way, but they also wanted to avoid being discommoded or losing confidence in the goodness and righteousness of their particular home” (45). Thus, in Twain’s text, slaves are renamed “Negro laborers.”

Here Twain's text engages the contradictory debate about the political and economic issues surrounding what to do with recently freed slaves. Like other sources, Twain's text seems to uphold racial hierarchy, but challenges a system of slavery and continued discrimination of newly emancipated African Americans. In the September 15th issue of the same paper which published Twain, an unknown author claims that the allowance of "coolie" labor is an excuse for Southerners to continue to subjugate African Americans: "[Southern men] proceeded upon the old assumption that the negro, being free, would degenerate into a vagrant nuisance, destined, in the end, to disappear in the track of the red man, and contended that the restoration of Southern prosperity would depend upon the substitution of another servile class, imported from the crowded hives of population in oriental lands" ("Chinese Labor"). Although the article seems sympathetic to the issue of the equal treatment of African Americans, the language regarding the possible Chinese workers reflects the popular assumptions of the nineteenth century that Asians were lower in the racial hierarchy. This article refers to the Chinese as "Celestials" and "Mongolians" that live in a "hive," thereby collapsing all Asian people into a single entity and reducing them to insects. Similarly, Twain's text also seems to categorize the Chinese laborers according to this racial hierarchy fit for "drudgery." However, by using the term Negro laborer when the reader would clearly read slave, this links the "coolie" system with slavery thereby undercutting his own championing of the Hawaiian contract labor system.

Just a few short years after Twain's letters were printed, the debate about Chinese immigration and labor became negative as Kuykendall noted happened in Hawaii in the

late 1860s.²³ This same negative view of the “anti-coolie” party had a U.S. counterpart; U.S. feelings about Chinese workers became increasingly hostile building up to the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882 (Gyory 11). Fears of Chinese workers taking jobs away from white workers were also part of the U.S. debate. In just three years after Twain advocated using Chinese labor to free white workers from the most labor intensive and least desirable jobs, the fear of Chinese stealing jobs from white workers were manifested through the use of Chinese and other immigrants as strike breakers (Gyory 29). So it seems that the issue about Chinese laborers was not as simple as these immigrants freeing white workers from “drudgery” and allowing white men to be overseers.

Thus, Twain’s letters seem to simultaneously celebrate the importation of Chinese workers and critique the system of contract labor. His text supports the racial hierarchy of the nineteenth century and mirrors some Americans opinion that Chinese laborers could be the cheap solution to the necessary labor shortage, without needing to rely on equality for African Americans, nor coaxing white workers to seek “drudgery” work. Chinese workers may be more “desirable” than African Americans, but they are still inferior to white Euro-Americans. But this created more fears of introducing numerous non-whites into the domestic U.S. with questions of how to make sure the Chinese were “tractable,” yet keep them separate. However, Twain’s text also undermines this support of the racial hierarchy by reporting on the unsavory business practices of the clergy.

²³ E.M. McCook, American minister to Hawaii, brought to the attention of the Hawaiian government a copy of U.S. Congress’ resolution to ban the “Coolie Trade.” McCook stated “his belief that the Hawaiian government would co-operate cordially in the effort ‘to discountenance and discourage a traffic so repulsive that it meets with the reprobation of the civilized world’” (Kuykendall 187). In 1862, U.S. Congress passed “an Act to prohibit the ‘Coolie Trade’ by American citizens in American vessels, and in January, 1867, adopted resolutions which condemned the trade as inhuman, immoral, and abhorrent to the spirit of modern international law and policy” (Kuykendall 186).

These Anglos seem to be just as susceptible to unethical behavior as the Kanakas or Chinese. He also indirectly links the contract labor system to slavery as a means to undercut his own claim that California should import "coolie" labor.

Conclusion

Due to the recent publishing of the first volume of his autobiography, there has been a resurgence in popular and scholarly interest in Mark Twain. However, there remains a need to recognize the significance of U.S. imperialism and the impact on American authors and Mark Twain in particular because this aspect is often neglected. In addition, there remains a need to explore U.S. expansion across the Pacific; Hawaii has remained a popular tourist attraction, but also has remained in a sense, a foreign space. If President Obama's citizenship was contested not only due to his father's "questionable" status, it was also muddled by the fact that he was born in Hawaii. Despite the fact that Hawaii is our fiftieth state, it remains represented in some senses as being part of a foreign space apart from the domestic nation. Currently, one of the topics in the media is that the U.S. must be concerned with an ever-growing global economy. However, if one recognizes the expansion of the U.S. in the nineteenth century was driven by the need to provide the nation with resources and labor, then one must also recognize that the U.S. has always had a global economy for the resources and labor were often found outside the continental U.S. Therefore, imperialism should be recognized as the shaping force of a nation that influences culture and literature; however, as Rowe argues, "Yet just as literary culture may be viewed...as fundamental to the colonial practices of the United States both inside its borders and in its increasingly global ambitions, it may also be used

to 'write back,' making visible its own potential complicity in such ideological work and sometimes subverting the very rhetoric of colonization and expansion" (14). Similarly, I suggest that even as a work criticizes the ideological or cultural dictates of that time period, that work is influenced by those same beliefs and statutes that it seeks to reject.

Nevertheless, it may have been even more difficult for Twain to escape the influence of the "rhetoric of colonization and expansion," for his trip to Hawaii had a personal impact beyond forming his authorial identity, creating travel writing, or as a tourist. Despite Twain's claim that he was an "unassuming stranger" in Hawaii, there was an additional role that Twain adapted during his trip to the Islands but is not revealed in *Letters from Hawaii*: a bachelor seeking a wife. He wrote to his mother and sister that a possible candidate met his eye during his visit to Waihee Plantation. He manages to visit the plantation owner's daughter despite injuring his leg after tripping over his horse's lariat: "It was then half after four, and I had an appointment to go seven miles and get a girl and take her to a card party at five. If I hadn't had a considerable weakness for her she might have gone to the devil under the circumstances, but as it was, I went after her" (Twain "Letter to Jane Lampton Clemens and Pamela A. Moffett"). When he visits another sugar plantation, he meets two other prospects: "I had a pleasant time of it at Ulupalakua Plantation. It is 3,000 feet above the level of the sea (in plain sight from here, 25 miles;) two pretty and accomplished girls in the family and the plantation yields an income of \$60,000 a year—chance for some enterprising scrub" (Twain "Letter to Jane Lampton Clemens and Pamela A. Moffett"). For Twain, Hawaii becomes a space where the domestic possibility of marriage is found in a foreign space where the bridal prospects could bring economic security. We see more overlaps of economics, domesticity, and the

use of foreign space through his pursuit of escape from bachelorhood. Thus this fourth potential role encapsulates the relationship of an individual's use of Hawaii as an opportunity to further both domestic bliss and business opportunity which mirrors the national use of foreign space to solve domestic, economic concerns.

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